



Pentagon Construction

Ahead of Sept. 11, 2002,
Completion Goal

RUDI WILLIAMS

WASHINGTON, Jan. 28, 2002—Workers are ahead of schedule in repairing the huge hole sliced out of the Pentagon Sept. 11, 2001, by a terrorist-hijacked airliner.

Brett D. Eaton, communications director of the Pentagon Renovation Program, said 100 to 200 employees a week have been able to return to the building as fast as workers rebuild sections. More than 1,000 employees so far are back from leased office space in surrounding communities, he said.

More than 24,000 military and civilian employees fill the Pentagon every workday. Thousands were displaced when the air-

liner slammed into the building, killing 125 people on the ground, Eaton noted.

"By the one-year anniversary, Sept. 11, 2002, people will be able to look out of their office windows on the E Ring deck to watch ... a dedication ceremony that the Army Corps of Engineers are planning for a memorial," Eaton said.

Until about a month ago, crews were working around the clock, seven days a week, slowly knitting and weaving together the Pentagon's broken wings. Now, they work 20 hours per day, six days a week, with Sundays off.



Renovation plans call for this engraved stone to be placed at the crash site during dedication ceremonies on Sept. 11, 2002. The same quarry that produced the stones to build the Pentagon 60 years ago is again providing stone for current reconstruction efforts. Quarry workers at the Bye Stone Company in Ellettsville, Ind. signed the stone in honor of those killed when the hijacked airliner struck the building Sept. 11. Signatures also represent some of the hundreds of construction workers currently rebuilding the Pentagon.

Photo by Rudi Williams

"This is fast-track-type work. We're working two 10-hour shifts, six days a week," said Keith Curtin, a construction superintendent. "We have many more people than you normally have on a job this size trying to get the work done as quickly as possible." About 700 workers are on site during the day and 300 at night, he noted.

Curtin and other workers started renovating the 60-year-old Pentagon wedge by wedge in 1997. They no sooner stepped back to admire their first rebuilt wedge when the crashed airliner demolished it. The building withstood the attack as designed—strength and security features added to the renovated section are credited with saving many Pentagon workers' lives, he said.

Curtin said the goal now is to "rebuild the wedge as quickly as possible." Their deadline is Sept. 11, the first anniversary of the terrorist attack.

"I think I speak for the entire renovation program and all the contractors when I say how great a feeling it is to be a small part of rebuilding the nation's military headquarters," Eaton said. "It's a feeling of pride we all have for being able to contribute any way we can. Everyone here realizes they're a part of history. They're helping to rebuild a national icon."

Congress recently provided additional money to speed the entire Pentagon renovation project. The scheduled completion

has moved up four years to 2010, Eaton noted.

When the outermost wall of the destroyed wedge is replaced, the Pentagon's exterior will look almost exactly as it did before the terrorist attack, Eaton noted. The interior, once again, is being rebuilt with reinforced concrete and other safety and security measures that will make it stronger and more modern than the rest of the building, he added.

The Pentagon cost \$50 million to build in the early 1940s. The total renovation cost now, including rebuilding the damaged area a second time, is about \$3 billion. Once completely renovated, the Pentagon will have all new mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems; elevators and escalators; cable management systems; improved fire and life safety systems; and flexible ceiling, lighting, and partition systems.

A large sign is being erected at the crash site that reads:

"Terrorist attacks can shake the foundations of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America."

—President George W. Bush
Sept. 11, 2001

Editor's Note: This information is in the public domain at <http://www.defenselink.mil/news>.